

# Seven Steps to Applying for Financial Aid

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# 1

## CHECK DEADLINES

**2011-2012 Academic Year**

**Federal Deadline:**  
June 30, 2012

**Missouri State Deadline:**  
April 1, 2011

**Institutional Deadlines:**  
Check with your institution's financial aid administrators.

To ensure all financial aid deadlines are met, you may use estimated tax information to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Remember, you can make corrections to your FAFSA when actual tax information becomes available.

# 2

## GATHER INFORMATION

All documents should be dated for the calendar year preceding the academic year you are applying for. For the 2011-2012 academic year, you will need to provide financial information from 2010.

- Your Social Security number
- Your driver's license
- Your alien registration or permanent resident card (if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- Your W-2 Forms and other records of money earned
- Your (and your spouse's, if you are married) Federal Income Tax Return
  - › IRS 1040, 1040A, 1040 EZ
  - › Foreign Tax Return, or
  - › Tax Return for Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Marshall Islands, the Federal States of Micronesia, or Palau
- Your parents' Federal Income Tax Return (if you are a dependent student)
- Your untaxed income records
  - › Veterans non-education benefits
  - › Child support received
  - › Worker's compensation
- Your current bank statements
- Your current business and investment mortgage information, business and farm records, stocks, bonds and other investment records

# 3

## OBTAIN A FOTW WORKSHEET

Practice answering FAFSA-related questions by completing the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet before tackling the online FAFSA. The FOTW Worksheet allows students and parents to read and fill in questions before submitting information to the U.S. Department of Education.

# 4

## COMPLETE THE FAFSA

The FAFSA determines financial aid eligibility for most federal, state and institutional programs. You may complete the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). The FAFSA is printed, distributed and processed free of charge by the USDE.

**Be wary of financial aid websites such as FAFSA.com.** These sites do not serve the same purpose as the official FAFSA website and may charge a usage fee. **Remember, the FAFSA is always FREE!**



Financial aid professionals will be on hand at locations throughout the state to help students and parents fill out the FAFSA. To see a complete list of FAFSA Frenzy locations in your area, visit the Missouri Department of Higher Education's website at [dhe.mo.gov/ppc/fafsa\\_completion.php](http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/fafsa_completion.php).

# 5

## REVIEW YOUR SAR

Once your FAFSA has been processed, the USDE will send a Student Aid Report to the e-mail or mailing address provided on your FAFSA. An electronic copy of your SAR will be sent to the postsecondary institution you listed on your FAFSA.

The SAR is used to inform you of your Expected Family Contribution. Your EFC is not the amount you must pay your school; it is used to determine financial aid eligibility. The EFC is subtracted from your institution's Cost of Attendance to determine financial need.

Use your Personal Identification Number to update or correct information provided on the FAFSA.

# 6

## SUPPLY INFORMATION

Your financial aid administrators *may* require additional information such as:

- Financial records
- Educational benefits
- Adoption, foster care or ward of the court documentation
- Emancipated minor or legal guardianship documentation
- Homeless or at risk of being homeless documentation
- Dislocated worker documentation

# 7

## EVALUATE YOUR AID

Review your award letter. Contact your institution's financial aid office for additional information.

The screenshot shows the FAFSA website interface. At the top, it says 'START HERE GO FURTHER FEDERAL STUDENT AID' and 'Free Application for Federal Student Aid'. Below this is a navigation bar with links: Home, About Us, Student Aid on the Web, PIN Site, Contact Us, Browse Help, and a search bar. The main banner features a group of diverse students and the text 'Get help paying for college'. Below the banner, it says 'Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)' and has a prominent 'Start Here' button. To the right of the button are three bullet points: 'Start or continue your FAFSA', 'Correct your FAFSA', and 'Check the status of your FAFSA, and more...'. At the bottom, there are two sections: 'Deadlines' with a link to 'Information about your deadlines.' and 'Announcements' with a link to 'The new 2011-2012 FAFSA is here! To begin your application, click Start Here above.' and a 'School Code Search' link.